



Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For Information Contact Public Affairs
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TRANSPORTING ALIENS SENDS MAN TO PRISON FOR 54 MONTHS

TUCSON, ARIZONA -- JORGE MENDEZ-FRANCO, 32, was sentenced today, by U.S. District Court Judge Frank R. Zapata, to 54 months imprisonment for transporting 139 illegal aliens.

On April 13, 1999, U.S. Border Patrol agents stopped the defendant, who was driving a semi-tractor trailer, at a checkpoint located north of Nogales, Arizona. After searching the trailer, the agents discovered a partial load of produce and 139 illegal aliens, including several small children and infants. Agents also discovered that the refrigeration unit was running in the trailer. At sentencing, Judge Zapata noted that the sentence was enhanced because the low temperature, combined with the large number of individuals in the trailer, presented a substantial risk of serious bodily injury or death.

On September 15, 1999, a jury found Mr. Mendez-Franco guilty of one count of Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens and three counts of Transportation of Illegal Aliens.

The investigation that led to the successful prosecution in this case was conducted by the U. S. Border Patrol.

The prosecution was handled by Daniel J. Santander and Brian G. Larson, Assistant United States Attorney's, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-99-710
RELEASE NUMBER: 2000-011

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